



Tips for Submitting a Program of Distinction Manuscript from Peer Reviewers

Before You Start...

1. Read a current Program of Distinction to get an idea of what was successful.
2. The Knowledge & Research Base and Needs Assessment components of the manuscript are essential to a good manuscript. A program you have loved doing that has received positive feedback from participants is not necessarily a Program of Distinction. The program's goals and objectives must be aligned with these two basic, underlying components.
3. Set aside enough time for the writing of the manuscript to do it well.

While You are Writing....

4. Write an outline of your manuscript first to make sure you are including everything.
5. Follow the specified Programs of Distinction submission form format when writing your manuscript: <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/about/pod.htm>. Include the number and title of each section. This makes it easier for the reviewers to recognize that you have clearly addressed each element in the submission and makes scoring much simpler.
6. Rather than simply citing research studies, integrate these studies into the narrative and explain how they relate to your program. Present these studies as you would in a review of the literature or a journal article.
7. Clearly state the goals of the program and explain how the delivery methods help to meet those goals.
8. Keep in mind the reader has no context or knowledge about your program. Provide detail about what the program actually does (how does it deliver the lessons, how many classes, in what context are the lessons delivered, who delivers the curriculum, is there training, etc.)

9. Consider using a logic model to help the reader understand the inputs, outputs, and outcomes for your program. This would help to strengthen the evaluation section, which tends to be the weak part of many manuscripts.
10. Distinguish between process and outcome evaluation and be specific about how you have addressed each of these. Make sure you have both, not just one or the other.
11. Demonstrate in your manuscript what you have accomplished. Show numbers, graphs, statistics, pictures, quotes, etc. This is evidence that convinces the reader. Saying something like, "We got lots of positive feedback," is too vague and unconvincing.
12. Think through and communicate your research connections. Emphasize what is unique about our programs--our connection to the land grants. Let's be sure to tell folks about our great connections.
13. Communication with Stakeholders tends to be a weak section in many manuscripts. Did you write reports? Post your program and evaluation results on the Internet? Develop a brochure? Did you share this information at meetings, through publications, etc.? Please provide more information than just saying "we communicated results."
14. Strongly consider including graphics, charts, or tables. This increases the interest for the reader and makes it easier to review sections that present a lot of statistics or numbers.
15. Throughout your submission, follow up all general statements with concrete examples. For example, if you are writing about "program sustainability," you might say, "Our program has been sustained for three years through various strategies. These strategies include: grant funding from XYZ Corporation, public donations, adoption of our annual event by the City of ABC, and hiring of a permanent program leader to conduct this program by the local youth bureau."
16. Use APA style for any citations. If you are not sure how to do this, look it up.
17. If any criteria have not been met, please explain why. For example, was there a reason why no process evaluation was conducted?

Once You Have a Draft...

18. Read carefully the submission guidelines to ensure that you've addressed everything in your manuscript.
19. Share a draft of your manuscript with a colleague or friend who is not familiar with your program to proof read it and provide constructive feedback on the manuscript's clarity.